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THE NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

BY CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF

Secretary of the League

Better municipal administration will come when the people awaken to the need of it. As Dr. Goodnow in his "Politics and Administration" (which in a way is an outgrowth of the National Municipal League's work on the Municipal Program) said in regard to the use of permanent experts in the higher posts of the public service, "That this can be accomplished by any changes in the law may, perhaps, be doubted. That it will be accomplished so soon as an educated and intelligent public demands it, is a moral certainty."

The League is an active agency in the betterment of American municipal administration in that it is directly and particularly engaged in creating "an educated and intelligent public" in the matter of municipal government. From the beginning of its activities in 1894 it has sought to promote a more general interest in municipal questions and especially in their political and administrative aspects.

Dr. L. G. Powers, the Chief Statistician of the Federal Census Bureau, in an address before the League at its Pittsburgh meeting on the "The Bureau of the Census as an Agent of Municipal Reform," put the case in this fashion: "In summing up the results of these seven years' use of the census schedules, I think I can best state the same by making use of some of the terms of the old religious revivalists of a half century ago. They employed three words to express the different changes in the minds and acts of the sinners as the result of the efforts of the churches and Christians to reform the evildoers. Those words, or phrases were, 'conviction of sin,' 'conversion' and 'regeneration.' Men were said to have been convicted when they were satisfied that they were sinners; but such conviction amounted to but little unless the mental impression led to some action by which the one convicted was turned sharp around from an evil course and began to walk in a correct one. Such a turning around was spoken of as conversion; but starting on such a good road, though commendable, was not enough; the converted must walk sufficiently in that road to become

changed in all his vital relations with the world. Such a change was called regeneration.

"Employing these religious terms, I will begin my summary of results by saying that as one of the general results of the use of the census schedules, reinforced by all of the other factors working for municipal reform, city officials as a whole have become 'convicted' of the folly of diverse accounts without system and without uniformity. They have become convinced of the value of accounts uniform for all cities, and arranged in a form that will permit of using accounts as a test and measure of the governmental economy and efficiency as well as of fiscal honesty."

"I am glad that I can report more than the foregoing; I can say not only that all city fiscal officers have been convicted, but convinced of the desirability of uniform accounts and reports for the purpose of making such reports the measure of official economy and efficiency. A very large proportion of the fiscal officers of our larger cities have become converted; they are facing in another direction from what they were ten years ago."

To continue this ecclesiastical simile the League labors as an evangel to convict the American people of their municipal sins and shortcomings and to bring about a change or conversion in their municipal conduct.

Its first object according to its declaration of principles has been to multiply the numbers, harmonize the methods and combine the forces of all who realize that it is only by united action and organization that good citizens can secure the adoption of good laws and the selection of men of trained ability and proved integrity for all municipal positions or prevent the success of incompetent or corrupt candidates for public office.

To this task the National Municipal League has addressed itself, with, I am happy to say, an increasing measure of success. Since its formation in May, 1894, it has steadily pursued this object. Thanks to its guidance and inspiration, new local organizations have been started and old ones revived and reorganized. Newspapers have been interested and as a consequence have coöperated in spreading information and creating public sentiment. The printed page and the spoken word have been utilized to the same end. In short, an active, aggressive, persistent propaganda has been carried on to the end that the American people may appreciate the importance and growth of the municipal situation.

The New York Evening Post in an article on the work of the Bureau of Municipal Research described its propaganda work somewhat in this fashion: "Its secretary attends to the publicity end, not only in New York, but throughout the country. He is carrying forward the propaganda of municipal research with persistence and vigor. He is not insensible of the value of publicity, and his audience is a wide one. He is constantly in touch with the mayors and controllers of the first 100 cities of the United States. The editors of the principal newspapers in these cities are also on his mailing list, and whenever the bureau completes a piece of constructive work, that fact is heralded throughout the land within a short space of time. He lectures, too, before colleges and civic societies, and to his efforts is doubtless due in large measure the growth of the municipal research idea. That the bureau has impressed the country is proved by the flood of letters it receives from persons and organizations interested in good government. They desire to get advice and to hear about the results achieved in this city with the purpose of applying the research treatment to the ills of their own municipalities." The same may with equal force be said of the National Municipal League's purpose and work for higher municipal standards and for improved methods of municipal business.

Some idea of the measure of the effectiveness of the League's leaflet and pamphlet publications may be gathered from a few illustrative instances. As to the leaflet, "The Ignorance of Good Citizens," a new California member wrote, "This hits me pretty hard, so hard that I came to my office yesterday (Sunday) and did some 'tall digging' and didn't get there then. Pray excuse the vernacular, but it seems to fitly express my feelings. I think if I could get a few duplicates of that pamphlet, I would use it." Another leaflet, reproducing a brief address before the League at Harvard, has run into a number of editions; it has been generally reproduced, it has been reprinted in the local columns of the papers and commented on editorially and excerpts sent out broadcast by syndicates, and although it was first printed in 1902 it is still appearing under various guises, and although it is not always credited to the League it is doing good work in pointing out the "Public Service by Citizens in Private Station," and continues to furnish encouragement and inspiration to ever new groups of men.

Early in December the editor of a metropolitan journal asked if we had any spare copies and back numbers of past reports and pub-

lications of the National Municipal League which we could send to him from which he could get quotations, bearing on civic affairs, one of which he was responsible for putting on his editorial page each day. A short time before the editor of a leading western paper wrote: "Let me thank you again for the pamphlets you have been sending lately. I don't know how many editorials I have dug out of them. The League seems to me an invaluable clearing house for ideas. That address of Sparling's was especially good. It furnished three editorials."

The League's clipping sheets serve a similar purpose and are widely used, not only at the time of their issuance, but for a long time thereafter. We have found them served up for effective use so long as three years after their first appearance. They also serve to keep our members in touch with current development and to supply speakers with much needed data.

The various papers read at the annual meeting do yeoman service, not only in the published volume of proceedings, but in the same way as the clipping sheets. They are reprinted time and again, and some magazines regularly depend upon using a certain number of these productions. Moreover they appear as special articles and as the basis for extended editorial comment. In this way they continue to do permanent educational and inspirational work.

The League maintains close relations with the leading libraries of the country and especially with the state library systems and the legislative and municipal reference libraries which are springing up all over the country. One college librarian has had a special bulletin board placed in his reading room and devotes it exclusively to the circulars and clipping sheets issued by the League. The reference libraries are natural allies of the League and along municipal lines it is serving as a temporary clearing house for them, although eventually they will have to create one of their own, with the League as a component part, as the latter has neither the machinery nor the resources to do what is essentially a piece of library work. The significant thing to be noted in this connection is the fact that the League is laying the foundation for a useful extension of library facilities and promoting the idea that the library can be and should be made an important factor in the development of a sound municipal public opinion.

The annual meetings of the League are among its most effective means of emphasizing the importance of the municipal problem. As *Bradstreet's* pointed out after the recent Pittsburgh meeting:

"It is well to have the importance of proper municipal government emphasized as it is once a year by such organizations as the National Municipal League, which met at Pittsburgh this week. The mayor of that city, Mr. Guthrie, in setting forth the needs of the cities of Pennsylvania, really voiced a need of the people of all municipalities when he said that they must awaken to a full realization of the great influence which the government of a city has both upon the lives of the individuals residing within its limits and the perpetuity of our national life. Sound, too, was his suggestion that cities should be given full power to solve each for itself its individual problems, and not be subject to constant interference at the hands of state legislatures. The discussions of the league and of the American Civic Association, which met at the same place, were largely concerned with most practical suggestions for the betterment of sanitary and municipal conditions in cities, . . . and the function of business bodies in improving civic conditions. The membership of these bodies is widely distributed geographically, and their efforts should be distinctly helpful to the purposes they have in view."

These annual meetings are most serviceable in promoting the purposes of the League. They result in a broader view of the work; in a helpful interchange of ideas and experiences, and in quickening not only the life of the League, but of its affiliated (organization) members in both local and general missionary work. Abundant testimony to this effect might be quoted. Suffice it to say that after the Pittsburgh meeting one active militant political worker declared that he could not afford to miss another session; the secretary of a great business organization said it was certainly the most helpful meeting of the kind he had ever attended and a college professor expressed an opinion to the same effect, and a useful member of a state legislature stated in one of the public discussions that he had received his first impulse to enter upon public work from attending one of the League's annual conferences.

These meetings, as well as the central office, constitute a clearing house between reformers, public officials and civic workers (an increasing body of trained men) and quite as important, between all sections of the country, North, South, East and West, for the consideration of experiences, new ideas and the new application of fundamental principles and old established methods. Lieutenant C. P. Shaw, U. S. N., retired, in an address before the League of Virginia Municipalities said, "The distinguishing feature of this first decade of the

twentieth century is the organized effort to improve social and governmental conditions. I congratulate Virginia on the existence of the league that is here assembled. The moment a man begins to take counsel of others it is evident that he does not think that he knows it all and from that moment he may be expected to do better things, as the result of the information so obtained. The benefit received by the consultation of the officials of the different cities of the state suggests that it might be well to extend the scope of our inquiry and see what is being done beyond our borders. The most powerful organizations for governmental betterment is the National Municipal League with an individual membership of 1500 and an affiliated membership of 115,000. The Advisory Committee of this League is composed of sixty men, representing cities of every section of our country. To this committee was assigned the task of determining what was the question of most vital importance, so as to have it discussed at the next meeting of the League. After most searching inquiry they unanimously decided that the subject for debate should be 'how to make the average citizen realize his civic responsibility and how to make this realization a working force.'"

The League is engaged in what may be called a coöperative work in bringing local reform bodies, business organizations, public officials, educational bodies, state and national societies, into coöperation with each other in the matter of municipal work, and with the League. "This letter," a recent correspondent wrote, "is a bow drawn at a venture. Somewhere I have read that there is such a secretary and such a League and that such secretary resides at Philadelphia;" and then he proceeded to ask for help in local work in which he was engaged. From a North Carolina worker came this word: "It may interest you to know that we have succeeded in organizing a good government club for this community. At present we number over three hundred members. To this end the National Municipal League's experience and information which I have used from time to time have been invaluable."

As showing not only another phase of this sort of activity, but as indicating the efficiency which follows national affiliation and coöperation the following from a secretary of one of our affiliated organizations may be quoted: "Have you a list of the different civic and good government organizations in the different cities of the United States? If so, I should be very glad to receive a copy of the same or if not, of a list of the associations or clubs associated or coöperating with the

National Municipal League. I find that information is both more forthcoming and accurate when sought from these associations than from most any other source."

I may be permitted to paraphrase a letter of suggestion the League received last autumn from one of its earnest southern members to illustrate how its services are availed of: "For your information, in regard to what looks like a good outlook for disseminating some information upon municipal charter reform, I am taking the liberty of herewith enclosing you several clippings from the morning paper of this city outlining some suggested changes, and quoting from a letter of the League's, giving its objects and an account of the meeting of citizens held for this purpose, included in which is a partial list of some of the citizens present.

"As you will see from the account of the meeting a committee of nine was appointed to prepare a plan of permanent organization and report to a meeting to be held later. At present the members of the Board of Aldermen are elected by the precincts, each precinct electing one alderman, and they in turn elect all of the city officers, with the exceptions of the mayor, city clerk and tax collector. Seven of the present aldermen are not property owners, and this in a city of 18,000 population with an area of four square miles, and there has been a great deal of criticism of the Board, which is dominated by a theatrical agent and bill poster, and it is evident that some changes in the personnel of the board will be made next May, as well as an effort made to get some changes in the charter.

"Realizing that it is impossible to send literature to every voter, and that the usual circulars are wasted when sent out indiscriminately, and that effective work can only be done through parties whose opinions will influence others, I would suggest that you send some literature to the following named gentlemen, as they are all influential, and through them may be found the means of getting effective work. . . .

"Three of the above named are on the committee to prepare the plan of organization mentioned above. As to these gentlemen, ——— is a lawyer, over thirty years a trustee of the University and a member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese and a delegate to the last five or six General Conventions, including the one at Richmond last year; ——— a very influential member of the Baptist denomination, both locally and in the state, a man who began life as a printer; ——— present head of the ——— Fra-

ternity (Southern Order), a lawyer who is not dependent upon his practice for a livelihood; ——— a leading jeweler and a member of the present Police Commission, an excellent man and thoroughly interested in any subject he may study, for several years chief of the volunteer fire department; ——— a former cotton broker, now president of ——— Cotton Mills and ——— Cotton Mills, member of the School Committee of ——— township, one of the leaders in the recent prohibition election in this city; ——— a leading surgeon, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, Class of 1894; ——— newspaper correspondent and Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, would give wide publicity to his views on public affairs, and is now interested in stirring up civic pride, and is in a very receptive frame of mind.

"These suggestions are offered with the hope that they may be of service to you and enable you to put yourself in local touch with the movement, should you think it a good opportunity, as it seems to me, to advance the work of municipal reform."

The league in question was organized and a commission to frame a new charter was appointed and a new municipal spirit has since been manifested all along the line.

Chambers of commerce, boards of trade, and business bodies generally are taking more and more interest in important phases of municipal work. The Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce about two years ago joined the League; in 1907 it was represented at the Providence meeting by two delegates who prepared an elaborate report, which in turn was printed and sent to every member of the Chamber. Here is one of their recommendations: "They (the members of the Chamber) would have gained a valuable education and a wider horizon of knowledge as to municipal activities in other cities. This enrichment and stimulus would have been acquired through participation in the informal, but practical and helpful, Round Table conferences which were sandwiched between the regular sessions, and through hearing the formal treatises and extemporaneous debates of the convention, upon the same questions which these committees now have in mind and upon many other questions which this chamber will, sooner or later, have to take up. Your committee believes that hereafter the rapidly increasing importance and influence of the National Municipal League, in its work for the better government of cities, and of the American Civic Association, in its work of beautifying and improving the conditions of living in cities, will warrant

the Chamber in sending to their annual meetings a good representation from those committees which should be especially interested in the subjects announced for the conferences."

The interest aroused by this report was so considerable that the Chamber invited the League to hold its 1908 meeting under its auspices, which was done. Moreover, its last annual report chronicled a series of achievements along municipal lines, which could well have been regarded as an important year's work for an organization devoted exclusively to civic activities. The Cleveland Chamber of Commerce, which enjoys the reputation of being not only one of the foremost business bodies in America, but one of the most effective factors for civic advance as well, has for years had its representatives attend the annual meetings.

Coöperation with public officials is increasing rapidly. At one time there were six governors enrolled and several of them made constant use of the League's resources. The number of mayors, auditors and councilmen who avail themselves of its resources, always quite considerable, is now assuming large proportions. Here is how one of them felt about his membership:

"Some time ago I was a member of the League, but I think about a year ago I felt that I must drop my membership, and did have my name canceled from your list of membership, although I disliked very much to do it. I feel that the League fills an important place in the municipal field and is a source of great benefit to its members, and it gives me great pleasure to enclose my check for \$5 covering the enrollment card herewith, and to feel that I am again to be placed upon the membership roll of a society which is doing a valuable work throughout the country, and is of great benefit to all who are interested in municipal matters."

From the beginning the League has promoted a close affiliation with educational institutions, and in 1900 it appointed a Committee on Instruction on Municipal Government in American Colleges and Universities, with the late Dr. Thomas M. Drown, then President of Lehigh University, as Chairman, which was the commencement of a long and careful effort to bring to the attention of educators the importance of systematic instruction in municipal government and citizenship. This Committee prepared a series of reports, including syllabi and outlines of courses, which have been very generally availed of by instructors. It was followed by a special committee known as the Committee on the Coördination of Instruction in Municipal Gov-

ernment and composed of those actually giving instruction along those lines, designed to bring together for mutual conference and help the great number of men who in the several colleges and universities were giving attention to this subject. Of this committee, Prof. L. S. Rowe, of the University of Pennsylvania, was the first chairman, and Prof. W. B. Munro, of Harvard, the second and present Chairman. As a complement of these two committees, another was appointed to consider the question of instruction in municipal government in elementary schools. Of this Committee Superintendent William H. Maxwell of Greater New York was Chairman. This committee did for the elementary and high schools what the Drown Committee had done for colleges and universities, and it in turn was followed by a committee of which Prof. Jesse J. Sheppard, of the High School of Commerce, New York City, is Chairman, which is doing for elementary school instructors what the Munro Committee is doing for college and university professors.

In addition to work along these lines the League is seeking to bring the various educational institutions into closer touch with advance work both through the Baldwin prize, which supplements the formal work of instruction, through the college libraries and very often directly through membership.

The League has also maintained close coöperative relationships with such national organizations as the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Civic Association (with which it has twice met jointly in annual meeting), the American Society of Municipal Improvements, the National Civic Federation and the League of American Municipalities.

It has also kept in helpful touch with the various state leagues of municipalities, of which those in Wisconsin, Iowa, California and Pennsylvania are the leading. Moreover it has maintained close fraternal relations with the Union of Canadian Municipalities.

With all of these several bodies there has been not only a full interchange of thought and publications, but the League has placed its services and resources freely at their disposal and sought in various ways to bring them into helpful coöperation and coördination for a higher municipal life.

Let us now turn to the constructive side of the League's activities. Through its propaganda, through its insistence upon the moral, as well as the social, scientific and economic questions and through its services as a clearing house in municipal affairs, the League is awaken-

ing interest throughout the country, and through its committees it is educating the interest so awakened and through its program is directing it into effective channels.

The League's second declared purpose, to quote from its constitution, is "to promote the thorough investigation and discussion of the conditions and details of civic administration, and of the methods for selecting and appointing officials in American cities, and of laws and ordinances relating to such subjects." In the growing complexities of legislation and more particularly of the municipal problem an organization like the National Municipal League is essential.

Perhaps I can best describe the scope of the League's constructive work by quoting from a circular about to be issued in which its activities are outlined.

"If you have a general interest in municipal questions and wish to keep informed of the latest progress and thought, you can nowhere find more valuable material than in the League's annual and special reports.

"If you believe that city taxes should be distributed fairly and collected economically, and hope for an improvement in present methods, you will follow with pleasure the work of the League's committee on municipal taxation. Incidentally you can render a public service by assisting in the investigations of this committee.

"If you have found it impossible to compare or understand the involved accounts of American cities, and would like to see a simplified and uniform method of accounting adopted, you will find a system described in the publications of the League, which has many times proved its practical utility in actual service.

"If you believe that one way to secure good government is to inculcate sound principles in the minds of the children during their school days, you will find the subject covered in a most practical and intelligent manner by the League's Committee on Instruction in Municipal Government.

"If you approve of the formation and encouragement in the colleges of active clubs for the study of municipal problems and the duties of citizenship; if you believe that the members of these clubs on graduation should be guided at once to opportunities for lines of political usefulness in their respective cities, you will see that these labors also have been taken in hand by a separate committee of the League.

"If you think the present method of nominating elective municipal

officers can and should be improved, you will be interested in the notable progress of the League's committee on this subject.

"If you are interested in the movements for Municipal Reform and Municipal Home Rule, and believe that the city's local policy should be determined by its own citizens, read the League's careful and intelligent expert report entitled 'A Municipal Program.' It has become a standard work for reference in preparing new charters.

"If you are among those who feel it is a just reproach to instructors on civil government in our colleges and universities that strength is wasted through the difference caused by limited vision, you will find a committee of the League which confines itself exclusively to bringing together the men engaged in this work, so that each may benefit by the experience of all.

"Whether you believe in municipal ownership or oppose it, you will follow with interest the broad investigation on this live and insistent question which is now being made by the League's Committee on City and Public Service Corporation."

It will take us too far afield to describe in detail the constructive work that the League has done along the lines of charter reform, municipal accounting and reporting, nomination reform, taxation and municipal franchises, and is carrying on in connection with the police and liquor problems and municipal health and sanitation. It will suffice if we consider but one phase, namely, that which has to do with the constantly increasing interest in charter reform. Several years ago the *Kansas City Star* declared that "as a result of the experience of Kansas City and other towns, ideas and principles are advanced and are likely to find their way into the new charter which were not seriously considered at the time of the adoption of the present instrument in 1889. Since that time there has been extensive discussion of the functions of city government, especially by that association of experts known as the National Municipal League. The publication of the model charter proposed by this organization five years ago has had a marked effect. The principles embodied in that work have been used more or less fully in the new municipal constitutions of New York, St. Paul, Duluth, Portland (Ore.), Havana, Manila and other cities." This opinion was amply corroborated by the testimony of Charles J. Hubbard, who was a member of the Commission, and who wrote, saying, "I am glad to put in writing what I said about the National Municipal League. I consider the publications of the League altogether the most valuable contribution that has been made

to the solution of the problems of city government. In the drafting of a new charter for Kansas City two years ago, the Board of Commissioners got more assistance, I think I may say, from the publications of the League than from all other sources combined. The same is true evidently throughout the country wherever municipal constituent law is under serious consideration. In the dozen years of its existence the League has shown an admirable persistence in the study and development of the subjects undertaken."

Such seems to be the usual opinion of those who use the League's publications and recommendations as set forth in the Municipal Program. For we find Joseph N. Teal, a member of the Charter Commission of Portland, Oregon, using this language in transmitting its conclusions which were subsequently adopted and now constitute the present charter of that city: "We drew very largely upon the Municipal Program for many of the ideas contained in this charter, and the work of the National Municipal League is to a great extent responsible for the movement which prompted the creation of this charter board. This is the first time in the history of our city that the citizens have had an opportunity to prepare a charter or to vote on it, the ordinary procedure being that the person who happened to be in control of a party prepared a charter and submitted it to the legislature, and the people here would know nothing of its principles or details until after it had gone into effect."

This opinion was concurred in by Thomas N. Strong of the same city, who for many years has been a vice-president of the League and was president of the Central Municipal League: "The educational work that has been done in this city for the last ten or fifteen years is bearing fruit abundantly. The reports of the National Municipal League were very largely used in the Charter Commission and have been much read here in the last two or three years. As you can see by the explanatory note in the proposed charter, some elementary truths are obtaining lodgment in the public mind, and we are now in a fair way of reaping something of that which we have sown."

E. R. Cheesborough, Secretary of the Galveston Good Government Club, and one of the active men in securing the adoption of the now widely famed Galveston Plan writes that: "Few persons have more keenly appreciated the magnificent services done to the citizens of the United States by giving them better local government through the educational basis encouraged by the National Municipal League than the writer of this letter."

The Chicago Charter Commission of 1906-7 prepared for its use a digest of city charters containing statutory and constitutional provisions relating to cities. This work was edited by Augustus Raymond Hatton, then of the Department of Political Science of the University of Chicago, now of the faculty of the Western Reserve University of Cleveland. In the preface to the volume it was declared that "The preparation of this volume was undertaken at the request of the Chicago Charter Convention, the purpose being to provide the members with a convenient book of reference for use during the drafting of the new charter for the city.

"Beside the digest of actual legal provisions it has been thought desirable to reprint the greater part of the model corporations act from the Municipal Program adopted by the National Municipal League in 1899. This act was framed by Messrs. Frank J. Goodnow, Albert Shaw, Leo S. Rowe, Horace E. Deming, George W. Guthrie, Charles Richardson and Clinton Rogers Woodruff, whose names alone are sufficient to demand serious consideration for any plan of municipal government receiving their endorsement. The act is not a slavish adoption of the forms and methods of other countries, but without neglecting the lessons of foreign experience, it aims to take account of American conditions and American political ideas. It has been pretty generally accepted by leading authorities on municipal government as the best plan yet formulated for the government of cities in the United States."

When the first drafts of the Municipal Program were submitted for tentative consideration at the Indianapolis (1898) meeting of the League, the *Philadelphia Ledger* declared: "While it is too much to expect that the various legislatures will act favorably upon the recommendations of the Indianapolis Conference, we may with reason anticipate that the seed will not fall everywhere upon unproductive soil. The participants in the conference are practical men, representative of the best thought and noblest impulse of the country. They have no personal ends to serve, and in calling general attention to the abuses which prevail with respect to municipal administration, they are performing a high civic duty and deserve the unstinted thanks of every patriotic American."

The Program was finally adopted the following year (1899) at Columbus, and the *Engineering News* of New York, one of whose editors was personally present, had this to say about the result: "The Municipal Program adopted last week by the National Municipal

League, is one of the best pieces of constructive work ever done by an organization devoted to the improvement of municipal government. In judging its merits or defects, it should be considered primarily as a declaration of principles, with suggestions for putting them into effect and continuing them unviolated. At the same time, the charter outlined in the Program is in itself a better and more complete framework for a municipal government than any existing city charter which we now recall. The Program has been made flexible in order to permit modifications to meet the traditions and needs of different states and cities; but certain fundamental principles are always kept in full view, especially as wide a measure of municipal home rule as is consistent with the interests of the commonwealth," an opinion which the *News* has taken occasion to repeat on more than one occasion. In 1902 in answering an inquiry it said, "By far the most important contribution to the literature of charter reform is the proposed model charter and accompanying explanatory and critical papers published in 1900 under the title *A Municipal Program*."

Bradstreet's of New York fully shared this opinion, saying: "The feature of the proceedings of the municipal reformers at Columbus, Ohio, this week has been the presentation of a program of reform which deserves and should receive widespread attention from citizens interested in the betterment of the government of cities. Indeed, we can recall no formulation of the ends to be attained and of the method to be followed in attaining them at once so comprehensive and so seemingly fruitful in possibilities as that proposed as the result of careful deliberation by the committee on municipal program of the National Municipal League. Movements for the reform of municipal government have up to the present been largely sporadic, and in some cases they have carried within them the germs of reaction, owing in no small degree to a certain distrust of democratic institutions on the part of leaders among the reformers. The program to which we have directed attention is free from this source of weakness and aims to enlarge rather than lessen the amount and degree of popular responsibility.

"This program does not propose to leave the organization of the municipality, as it too often is, the mere creature of state legislatures. In that direction lies the ultimate frittering away of all responsibility for the good or bad government of cities. In common with the sanest among the wise who have devoted thought to the improvement of conditions in the government of cities, the authors of the program under consideration advocate a large degree of home rule."

So far as constitutional conventions are concerned, the Program has been most useful. The Rush Amendment to the Colorado Constitution is almost a reenactment of the League's proposed constitutional amendment. In 1901 the Secretary was invited to address a committee of the Virginia Constitutional Convention and outline the principles of the League's Municipal Program. As a result the Committee on the Organization and Government of Cities made a report, in which almost the precise language of the Program was adopted in so far as it relates to franchises and the question of bonded indebtedness. This report was adopted by the Convention.

This makes the second Constitutional Convention that has followed the League's suggestions, that of Alabama being the first.

So general and so widespread has been the use of the Program that Dr. Delos F. Wilcox, the author of *The American City* was justified in declaring in a paper on the Program that while "It has nowhere been enacted into law as a whole its influence has been felt practically everywhere 'under the flag' that charters have been framed, constitutions revised or municipal reform agitated. It was published by the Havana Charter Commission and by the Porto Rican and Philippine Commissions. It has left marked traces in the new constitutions of Virginia and Alabama, and has formed the basis for a sweeping amendment to the Colorado constitution. The Charter Commission of Portland, Ore., used it. The Charter Revision Commission of New York City adopted some of its provisions. The Duluth and St. Paul charters are in line with it in important respects. It has formed the basis for agitation for charter reforms in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Delaware and doubtless many other states," and Professor John A. Fairlie, at the Pittsburgh meeting, concluded a striking paper on "Recent Charter Tendencies" in these words: "In the main, then, the principles of the Municipal Program of the National Municipal League have been steadily gaining ground. Its influence can be seen in the work of state constitutional conventions, in state laws and in charters for particular cities. In no one place, however, has it been adopted as a whole; and even where some of its principles have been accepted the details have often been modified. Indeed in several instances a distinct improvement has been made over the detailed provisions framed ten years ago. If one general criticism may be made of that Program, it is that the proposed constitutional provisions are much too long, and specify detailed provisions which should rather be left to regulation by statute or local action. But the

fundamental principles of the program still hold good, and should and will continue to be extended even more in the future than in the recent past."

It is needless to add that the League has come in for its share of criticism. It has been denominated "too rhetorical," "platitudinous," "unpractical," "a group of dinner reformers," "dreamers." Enough has herein been set forth to show quite conclusively the very practical and useful character of the League's work and activities. President McFarland, of the American Civic Association, in responding to an address of welcome at Providence said that he was inclined to suggest that the National Municipal League represented the man at his desk and the American Civic Association represented the man with his sleeves rolled up digging the mud out, but that he was reminded that he had heard a few years since the city accountant of Chicago describing in a meeting of the National Municipal League how the methods of accounting fostered under its organization saved to the city of Chicago a million dollars a year, and that it was the presiding officer, Mr. Deming, who had said, "And this is from an association of dreamers."

In the words of another observer who has a wide and first-hand acquaintance with municipal conditions in America (Charles Zueblin): "One has but to attend one of the sessions of the League to find that it is conducted by experts, and to find that the men who have charge of its activities are men who are versed in all the intricacies of municipal government, and who not only know what is going on in all parts of the country, but who are largely responsible for the good things that are going on in the cities. . . . If one looks at the work of the National Municipal League, he finds that the officials are identified with everything that is moving toward the improvement of the great municipal corporations and he realizes at once that he is in the presence of trained experts."

I have quoted freely from various authorities as I felt it would be more appropriate and convincing as well as more interesting to have others tell the story so much as possible, and to give the views of those who looked at it from the outside and therefore were more likely to have a better perspective.

To sum up, the field of the National Municipal League embraces

- 1st. Everything that relates to the forms or framework of cities and to the laws or ordinances for them.

- 2d. Everything that relates to the methods for securing the

nomination, and election or appointment of the best obtainable municipal officials and employees.

3d. Everything that relates to the methods of city governments in dealing with the social, moral, educational, criminal, physical and commercial or business problems incident to modern municipal life.

4th. Everything in the way of measures to prevent crime, graft, corruption and inefficiency.

In all these lines the National Municipal League serves as an effective agency first for the ascertainment, investigation and comparison of facts, experiences and views, and secondly for the formulation, discussion and final recommendation of reliable conclusions and valuable information. In selecting from this wide field the League endeavors to choose such lines of action as are not being fully covered by other organizations or in which its coöperation will be welcome and helpful.